

# NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

## CABINET

Wednesday, 24 November 2010

**PRESENT:** Councillor B. Hoare (Chair); Councillor P. D. Varnserry (Deputy Chair);  
Councillors Beardsworth, Church, Crake, B. Markham and Perkins

### 1. APOLOGIES

There were none.

### 2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> November and the 10<sup>th</sup> November 2010 were agreed and signed by the Chair as correct records.

### 3. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were none

### 4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Clarke declared a Personal Interest in Item 6 – Proposed Boot and Shoe Quarter Conservation Area, as a property owner within two of the proposed conservation area boundaries.

### 5. ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

There were none

### 6. BOOT AND SHOE QUARTER - POTENTIAL DESIGNATION OF CONSERVATION AREA

Councillor Clarke, welcomed the establishment of a conservation area in order to reflect the heritage of the Borough. He commented that the Spring Boroughs area was the traditional shoe making area although most of this heritage had been demolished. The report was about preserving the shoe making heritage of the industrial age. He emphasised that designation would not of itself bring about improvements to the local environment of the Mounts and highlighted issues concerning street cleaning, drain and gully clearing, the increase in HIMOs and the need to protect existing green spaces.

Councillor Mildren commented that no resources were available to make improvements: growth bids would need to be made as part of future budgets. Green spaces especially within the town centre area needed to be preserved where they existed.

Councillor Flavell asked why the Ward Councillors had not been consulted about the report. She commented that whilst WNDC were aware of the proposed Conservation area, both Borough and County Councillors for the areas had not been informed.

Councillor Mason welcomed the report and commented that it was an excellent idea. However, she expressed concern that the consultation would not go out widely enough to the people of Northampton. She requested that consultation be carried out not just to those in the proposed conservation areas but across the Town, as they were pockets of the shoe making industry elsewhere that would have a significant meaning for many other residents. She expressed a personal preference for Option 2 set out in the report.

Councillor Church, as the relevant Portfolio Holder, submitted a report that sought the approval of members to undertake a public consultation on a proposed Boot and Shoe Conservation Area. He reported that many people in Northampton valued the Boot and Shoe industry and the proposed conservation area would celebrate the history and heritage of this. It was not about protecting individual buildings but whole street scene including churches, chapels, pubs and houses built in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The consultation would be on the basis of the three options set out in the report. There would be rights and obligations placed on property owners and he hoped that the proposal would attract a great deal of interest. Whilst he recognised there was no additional money for the area buildings would be protected. He noted the adjacent Racecourse that was already protected. In respect of consultation with Ward Councillors he urged them to use the Forward Plan to keep themselves informed.

The Director of Planning and Regeneration commented that this report was of a technical nature and that consultation, including with Ward Councillors would begin from Cabinet's approval of it. In future Ward Councillors would be given prior notice. In answer to a question from Councillor P. D Varnsberry the Director commented that some of the impact on residents in a Conservation Area with regard to permitted development rights was set out in the Appendix to the report but that more information would be made available as part of the consultation.

The Chair commented that the proposed designation of a Conservation Area was long overdue and would add some protection to the area. If funds became available enhancements to the area could be made. The ambition to develop Northampton should include the preservation of its heritage.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That consultation take place on the three alternative conservation area boundaries, as described in the report.
  2. That the Director of Planning and Regeneration be delegated the authority to make any necessary amendments to Appendix 1 of the report, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration, prior to starting the consultation process.

## **7. BME HOUSING STRATEGY 2010-2013**

Councillor Clarke addressed the committee and welcomed the report. He commented that the needs of the BME community was so varied that a single report was not sufficient: the needs of some ethnic minorities differed greatly from others. He welcomed the approach of looking at Sharia Law and the ability of Muslims to exercise their 'Right to Buy' and the dialogue with the Islamic Bank. He disputed some of the figures set out in diagram on page 16 of the report and commented that there was a need to look at the vulnerability of elements of the BME community rather than simply ethnicity.

Councillor Beardsworth as the relevant Portfolio Holder submitted a report that sought to approval of the implementation for the BME Housing Strategy 2010-2013 as a replacement for the previous strategy from 2007. She explained that this report followed on from that submitted to Cabinet in July and was about how the Council delivered its housing services to

a diverse range of communities. The consultation had attracted many responses. Six objectives had been identified. She noted that the tabulation referred to by Councillor Clarke was based upon 2001 Census figures.

In answer to a question from Councillor P. D Varnsberry, the Director of Housing stated that the 210 residents interviewed were in addition to the 322 that had returned questionnaires. Further information had been forthcoming from community events. The replies to the consultation and the responses to them would be placed on the web site.

The Chair noted that the graph on page 16 of the Strategy showed the change in the BME population since 2001.

**RESOLVED:** That the implementation of the BME Housing Strategy 2010-2013 as a replacement for the previous strategy from 2007 be approved.

## **8. PERFORMANCE**

### **8.1 FINANCE MONITORING DASHBOARD TO THE END OF SEPTEMBER 2010**

Councillor Clarke commented that the questions he had asked at Cabinet on 3 November 2010 had not been answered and therefore he would repeat them. Further this report appeared to contradict that of 3 November. Appendix 3A showed that £400,000 out of a budget of £800,000 had been spent on the Cooper Street heating replacement scheme and the balance had been moved to Disabled Facilities Grants. He had argued against this on 3 November suggesting that the balance should be spent on window replacement at the Cooper Street flats. The current report appeared to show £400,000 removed from the Disabled Facilities Grants budget but it had not reappeared for Cooper Street flats window replacement. He queried where this money had gone. Councillor Clarke also queried why money was being spent on gym equipment if Leisure Services were shortly to be reformed as a Trust. He also asked how much the refitting of the basement of the Guildhall had cost and where this was shown in the Capital Programme.

Councillor Mildren noted the anticipated underspend of the General Fund and queried the effects in 2011/12 of underachieving the anticipated savings of £1.1million in Environmental and Cultural Services. He noted the expenditure on the PFI project from the HRA and queried whether money allocated to Decent Homes would be spent.

Councillor Perkins, as the relevant Portfolio Holder, submitted a report that set out the Council's overall financial position in respect of the General Fund and HRA Revenue and Capital, General Fund savings and efficiency targets, Treasury management and corporate income collection and Internal Audit recommendations. He referred to the projected underspends on the General Fund and the HRA and the alterations to the Capital Programme. In respect of the gym equipment at the leisure centres, the existing leases were coming to an end and the Council had the option to purchase this equipment outright. In respect of the unachievable savings Management Board had found other ways to make the savings from within Environment and Cultural Services. It was difficult to estimate the impact of this on future years. Councillor Perkins noted that in respect of Treasury Management there had been an issue in respect of IBS invoices had been identified and a solution now put in place. He would give Councillor Clarke a written response in respect of the Cooper Street flats funding. In terms of the Guildhall basement works, the cost had been met within the £200,000 previously allocated from the sale receipt of Cliftonville House. The finance costs of PFI had been covered from within the allocation made for it. In terms of Decent Homes a number of projects were currently being procured and it was anticipated that the capital allocations would be spent.

Councillor B. Markham noted that the purchase of a digital projector, that would also improve Dolby Sound reproduction, for Lings Cinema was most welcome.

The Chair commented that the report reflected the focus of Officers in monitoring the budget and he thanked them on Cabinet's behalf.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the forecast position of £410k under spend for General Fund (including debt financing) as at the end of September 2010 be noted.
  2. That the forecast position of £694k under spend for HRA fund (including recharges) as at the end of September 2010 be noted.
  3. That the Capital Programme monitoring position as at the end of September 2010, including forecast outturns, revenue expenditure funded by capital and slippage into 2010-11, and the related funding as set out at appendices 3a and 3b to the report, be noted.
  4. That the position reported on the key financial indicators as at paragraphs 3.2.1 to 3.2.3 of the report be noted.
  5. That the following additions to the capital programme 2010-11 be approved:

<b>Scheme Reference, and Description</b>	<b>2010-11 £</b>	<b>Future Years £</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
<b>General Fund</b>			
2010-11/GF43 Dell PCs and laptops	23,400	0	Prudential Borrowing
2010-11/GF47 Digital Projector	11,800	0	Prudential Borrowing
2010-11/GF46 Gym Equipment	57,097	0	Prudential Borrowing

## **8.2 CORPORATE PLAN PROGRESS REPORT - QUARTER 2**

Councillor Clarke referred to page 7 of the Appendix and noted that the meter used to measure footfall onto the market square was located by Millets. He commented that this was not a measurement of footfall onto the Market Square but only measured the numbers passing Millets onto the Market Square. He believed that it would be more useful for the Council to be aware of footfall movements across the town centre.

Councillor Mildren commented on the percentage of invoices paid within 30 days and the need to help local businesses in the current economic climate. He also noted the reduction in the amount of recycled household waste.

Councillor B. Markham, as the relevant Portfolio Holder, submitted a report that set out the Council's progress against the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan. He noted that four of the five corporate targets were being fully met and the remaining one was amber. Steady improvements were being made. In terms of footfall on the Market Square it had been a condition of the funding for the fountain and lighting scheme that footfall be measured using the meter at Millets. Footfall across other parts of the Town Centre were measured and reported to the Town Centre Partnership Board. Councillor Markham referred to page 3 of

the Appendix and the payment of invoices and agreed with Councillor Mildren that the Council should be helping local businesses. This was improving. He also referred to page 5 of the Appendix and the number of people that had been helped to avoid being made homeless and congratulated the Housing Directorate. Councillor Markham also referred to page 8 of the Appendix and the success of the Museums service in achieving "Best Special Project" in the East Midlands Inspiration Awards for an exhibition called "Strut!" produced in partnership with young people from the Daventry Springboard Centre.

The Chair commented that this was an important monitoring report and that the number of red indicators was reducing. Some situations were irresolvable, for example, a dry summer led to less grass being available for recycling. This situation could not be recovered outside of the growing season.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

The meeting concluded at 19.05 hours.